

AN: So, last time, we saw Sarafina accept the new position of Sumu dealer from Death. How will her first night on the job go? Let's find out...

Poison

Termination

TPYMK checked his watch for what felt like the hundredth time that night.

Where the hell is she?

The detective was sat on the sofa, staring at the wall while tapping his foot impatiently on the wooden floor. For the whole evening, his thoughts had been focused on Sarafina: the foul, unhealthy drug addict with a serious attitude problem. It seemed that every day they were at each other's throats – ever since that night he met her by the river. She was throwing up blood at the time. Not the most heartwarming of moments, he had to admit...

However, he couldn't say that he wasn't concerned for her wellbeing. As much as he hated to admit it, he'd developed something of a connection with the drug-addled lioness. He felt that it was his duty to look after her. Besides, it was something of a goal of his to try and get at least *one* Sumu user off the disgusting drug. And Sarafina seemed to be the only person in the world who expressed an interest in getting clean.

In his experience – and by now he had a lot of that – most Sumu users tended to start using and never stop. They forgot all about their troubles... their lives... everything. It swallowed them up.

But Sarafina... she was... different. Sure, it'd been a bit of hard work to get her to stop – but at least now she'd made her choice. He was happy for her – even if she did still smell like a dead body.

And now this pregnancy had arrived to wreck the situation even more. To be honest, he wasn't that surprised... Sarafina had a tendency to sleep with whatever animal she desired – and the Sumu users were dumb enough to satisfy her needs. In a way, it was her own fault that she had become pregnant.

She couldn't keep the baby, though. It would kill her. He'd heard what Wazimu had said quite clearly. Thanks to the serious effects the Sumu had on her body, Sarafina would never be strong enough to give birth. Not to mention the baby would be born deformed, with numerous disabilities. If she didn't do something quickly, then she would be dead within just a few months.

If she hadn't been killed already, that is.

Sarafina had been gone for hours now. He didn't know where she'd disappeared to. For all he knew, she could be smoking a joint before injecting some more Sumu right into her veins.

Somehow, though, he doubted it. Maybe he was just being stupid, but he thought that she was past that stage by now... Surely?

Something worse could have happened to her, though. Maybe Timon had finally decided to take revenge and finish off the lioness. He'd already tried to rape her once before. It

wouldn't be too hard for him to try again – even with his partner dead. If anything, that was more of an incentive to make her suffer...

I'll wait five more minutes, TPYMK decided, and then I'm gonna go look for her.

Right on cue, he heard the sound of the front door opening. He hopped to his feet instantly, watching as Sarafina stepped into the living room. She stared at him with narrowed eyes.

"What the hell are you looking at me like that for?" she grumbled.

"You've been gone..." he checked his watch, "four hours and thirty-six minutes. What have you been doing?"

"I told you," Sarafina said with a shrug. "I went for a walk. To clear my head."

"Yeah, I bet you did," TPYMK retorted. "Clear your head with another bag of Sumu, perhaps?"

"What?" Sarafina looked outraged. "No! I told you already – I'm not doing it anymore! What the hell is wrong with you?"

"I can smell drugs on you!" TPYMK lied. Truth be told, he was just yelling at her for the sake of it. He didn't really think she had been taking drugs...

"You've gotta be kidding me," Sarafina said. "I don't smell like anything!" She took a sniff under one of her forelegs, but then recoiled in disgust. "Okay, so I do – but that's just because I haven't had a bath."

"Why were you gone so long?" TPYMK asked, sitting back down on the sofa. "I was beginning to think that Timon had finally decided to come back and finish what he started."

"Timon is dead," Sarafina blurted out, although she soon wished that she hadn't.

Sarafina hadn't mentioned at all that she was now employed in the Sumu trade. And why would she? If he knew, the detective would pull out a pistol and shoot her right through the head.

Death had appeared to her a few hours ago, promising that he could make her very rich indeed. All she had to do was sell Sumu every night at the parties. And as long as she kept doing it, she would never have to worry about her or her baby's future ever again. She would be set for life.

But the money wasn't what intrigued Sarafina the most about the idea.

She was more interested in the revenge aspect.

Sarafina never wanted a baby. If it wasn't for those stupid users sleeping with her, then this never would have happened. Watching them wither and die after taking too much of the drug would bring her great pleasure indeed. And it would be all her doing. She was the supplier, after all. She would give them exactly what they wanted...

Death.

"What?" TPYMK stared at Sarafina in disbelief. "How did you find that out?"

"I, uh..." Sarafina fumbled for an explanation. She couldn't mention Death. Certainly not. "One of the... users told me."

"You went to another party?" TPYMK exclaimed. He looked mad.

"What? No," Sarafina said, shaking her head. "I just ended up bumping into one of those scumbags while I was walking. You know what they're like They told me that Timon was dead. I guess no one else is there to deal the Sumu now..."

Until I take over, she thought.

"Well, that's progress," TPYMK commented. "The less dealers around, the better. I imagine that whoever's running the operation will get a new one to move in at some point, though."

"What makes you think that?" Sarafina asked, feigning curiosity.

"They wouldn't just leave their customers to rot," TPYMK said. "They'll want to keep on selling. I imagine there are more scumbags out there who are willing to deal Sumu. They're probably right under our noses."

He didn't spot Sarafina flinching...

That night, Sarafina snuck out to the jungle.

After agreeing to take up the position of dealer, Death had begun to explain to her how the trade worked. It wasn't too much information to take in. Sarafina mused that he didn't tell much to his dealers. The cooks probably knew a lot more than they did... After all, they were the smart ones. Stupid people were more suited to supplying the drug...

Death had told her that the batch of drugs that would be sold to the customers had to be collected from a secluded location; namely, the desert. That made sense to her. Why would anyone smuggle drugs across a desert? The cops would never think of that...

All Sarafina had to do was collect the drugs from the transportation team and then sell them at the parties. It couldn't be any simpler. It was an easy job, and the lioness certainly knew how to appeal to the customers. They all knew her there... It would be too easy.

"They'd better get here soon."

Sarafina took a deep breath as she stood on the outskirts of the desert, up to her ankles in sand. She could feel it irritating her paws. She hated sand. It always managed to get buried in every conceivable part of the body...

God, I hate sand, she thought disdainfully. *It's in my fur, between my toes... Even right in the crack of my—*

"Hey!"

Sarafina was snapped out of her thoughts by a female voice.

"What?"

The lioness looked upwards to see a lion cub floating in the middle of the air. She wondered for a moment if perhaps Sumu had gone airborne, causing her to hallucinate – but then she realised that the cub was sat on top of an elephant.

"You're Sarafina, right?" asked the cub, narrowing her teal eyes. "The new dealer?"

The lioness nodded. "Yep," she said. "That's me. First day on the job. Who are you?"

"My name is Nala," the cub said, hopping down from the elephant's back.

Sarafina noticed that the elephant seemed awfully unresponsive. It just stared straight ahead with a blank expression on its face.

"What's up with him?" Sarafina said, indicating the elephant with a flick of her head.

"Elephants never forget," Nala said. "Well, unless you fry their brains. Injecting a little bit of Kifo into their skulls turns them into empty shells. It makes them very good at following orders."

Sarafina felt a pang of sorrow for the enslaved creature. *God, what a little brat*, she thought, glowering as the cub walked around to the back of the elephant. *I'd hate to meet her mother...*

"What are you doing?" Sarafina asked, following the cub around the side of the elephant.

"Just keep your mouth shut and do what you're told," Nala replied bluntly.

Who do you think you're talking to? Sarafina thought. She felt like slashing the little runt across the throat...

The lioness saw that the cub was untying some vines that were attached to the elephant's hind legs. She soon realised that the elephant had been dragging some sort of wooden sleigh across the desert. Piled on top of it were bags and bags of marijuana, Sumu, and various other drugs.

Sarafina had used all of them.

So this is how they do it, she thought. *They use elephants to carry everything all over the place.*

"Here."

Nala threw one of the vines to Sarafina, who caught it in her paw. "Drag that sleigh back to your party. Once you've sold your quota, come back here tomorrow and return it to me. Then I'll be back in two more days with another batch. Do you understand?"

Sarafina nodded. "Right. Whatever."

"*Do you understand?*" Nala spoke in a sterner tone this time.

"Yes. I understand," Sarafina said with a low growl.

"Thank you," Nala said. "Let's hope you're a good seller. The boss expects a good profit."

"I can handle it," Sarafina said. "Don't you worry."

Nala gave a little snort. "We'll see," she said, and then began to climb up onto the elephant's back. She patted its side. "Let's move."

The elephant slowly turned around, and began trundling back into the desert. Sarafina was left alone with the sleigh of drugs.

Sarafina glanced down at one of the vines, before placing it into her mouth. She turned around and began to drag the sleigh into the jungle. She found herself struggling under the weight, since her strength was far from the best after taking so much Sumu over the past few months. It had significantly weakened her bones and caused her muscles to wear away. She would never be as strong as she once was...

Eventually, Sarafina managed to get the sleigh into the jungle. She walked at a slow pace, not wanting to lose all of her energy so she wouldn't be able to charm any new customers into trying the drugs on offer. She knew from experience that new arrivals often came to the parties every night, usually coerced into attending by friends or relatives who had already taken drugs there.

That was how Sarafina had ended up taking her first hit from a marijuana joint... The memories of her old friend Sarabi had almost completely faded away. She didn't have any friends now. She was all on her own. Not even TPYMK mattered anymore. As far as she was concerned, whatever friendship they had was terminated.

But at least she could exact her revenge now.

Sarafina eventually reached the clearing, where most of the animals were already gathered, partying away. Some of them were high or drunk; they had their own personal stashes left over from previous purchases. But most of them were eager to buy more...

And Sarafina was happy to oblige.

They watched with confusion as Sarafina dragged the sleigh into view, taking position up in front of it.

"Hey, guys!" Sarafina exclaimed, greeting them all with a smile. "Who's up for some fun?"

To Be Continued...

AN: Sarafina doesn't seem to be doing too badly at the moment... That's worrying. However, at least we have an idea of how Sumu is transported across the desert. Enslaving elephants... Those greedy monsters! Plus we had a little glimpse of Nala again. She is quite heartless, isn't she?

It seems that things can only get better from this point. So, I'll see you next time, for another exciting story of *Poison*!